

# St David's Primary School

November 2008

building   
a learning   
renfrewshire 





# Follow-through report to the HMIE inspection of St David's Primary School, Johnstone.

## A Report by Renfrewshire Council: Education and Leisure Services

November 2008

### 1 The inspection

In January 2007, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on standards and quality in St David's Primary School following their earlier inspection in October 2006. Working with the education authority, the school prepared and made public an action plan in February 2007, indicating how it would address the main points for action identified in the original HMIE inspection report. The local authority supported the school in addressing the points for action and in monitoring the progress made. HMIE asked the authority to provide a progress report for parents and carers on the progress identified. This report, prepared by the authority, reflects our evaluation of the progress made in relation to the action plan.

### 2 Continuous improvement

Since the inspection report was published in January 2007 the school had increased its capacity to make further improvements in key aspects of its provision. The head teacher and her staff had demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and commitment in addressing the main points for action.

With very effective support from the senior management team (SMT), staff had worked collectively to develop and improve programmes of study which supported pupils' learning experiences. There was a greater focus on specific groups of pupils setting agreed targets to ensure consistency of pace and challenge. The monitoring of teacher's forward plans by the SMT had improved consistency in both tracking pupil progress and sharing of good practice.

The SMT had established effective working partnerships with a range of external agencies including, Social Work, National Children Homes and the Educational Psychological Services. They carefully monitored and evaluated the arrangements for partnership working and this helped to ensure continuity, consistency and targeted support for pupils both within and outwith school.

The plan to transfer the school to a new shared campus with another local primary school and family centre had gone ahead. The SMT and staff had worked closely with pupils, parents and staff from other establishments to ensure effective transition arrangements. This partnership working had included successful joint project work, joint staff training, sports events and parents' nights.

The head teacher and her staff had succeeded in maintaining a culture of continuous improvement in the school. As a result, the school had taken significant steps to improve its overall effectiveness.

### 3 Progress towards the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in January 2007 identified four main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made in addressing each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and others associated with the school.

#### **3.1. Ensure that tasks and activities provide sufficient challenge and support to meet the needs of all learners.**

The school had made very good progress in addressing this main point for action.

In partnership with the local Family Centre and the associated college of further education, the head teacher and depute head teacher had helped staff to focus on promoting active learning through play, at P1 to P4. Staff participated in a programme of observation and discussion that helped to develop their confidence in using active learning strategies and to share good practice. At the early stages, staff were now making effective use of active learning methodologies to motivate pupils and provide them with more suitable levels of challenge.

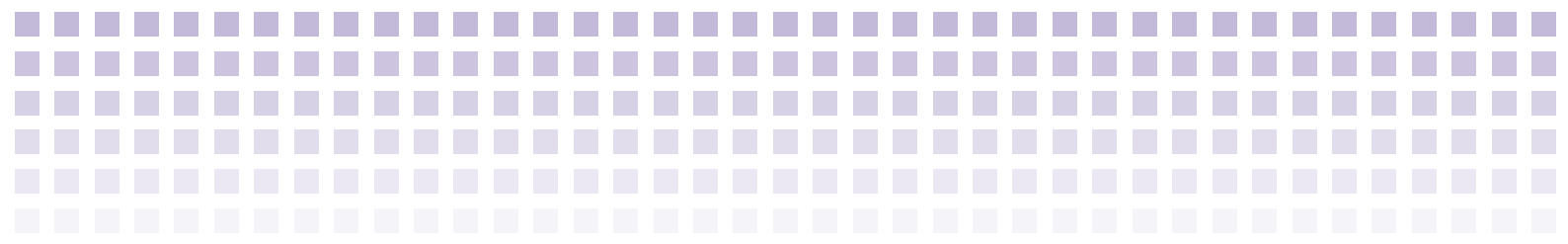
The national Assessment is for Learning (AifL) programme had been embedded at all stages, with learning outcomes and criteria for success shared with pupils. This had positively supported consistency in learning and teaching approaches across the school. Teachers and pupils worked together to set weekly targets and discuss ways of achieving them. This helped to ensure challenging tasks and engaged pupils more fully in learning. The monitoring of pupils' progress was carried out through plenary sessions at the end of lessons. Appropriate mechanisms had been established to assist pupils who required additional support to meet their targets and for pupils who had successfully achieved their targets to progress to the next level. Peer and self-assessment was successfully carried out by pupils, with effective guidance from the network support teacher.

The school homework policy had been reviewed to provide more suitably challenging tasks. The information from the review was used to bring about the following improvements: parental notes had been revised; targets were set and agreed with pupils; a greater emphasis was placed on personal research projects; a more formalised staged approach to homework in the upper school had been developed; and a survey of parental views had been carried out.

#### **3.2 Continue to improve attainment across the school, especially in English language.**

The school had made very good progress in addressing this point for action.

Building on existing good practice, the head teacher had set aside a specific time every day for the teaching of writing. This had made a positive impact on the quality of pupils' writing. The whole-school review of the writing programme had resulted in additional resources being allocated to support writing at P6. Teachers and pupils worked together to set targets to help develop personal and functional



writing skills. Regular monthly monitoring indicated a positive impact on increasing the pace of learning and motivating pupils to better achieve their goals. The head teacher had established an 'Author of the Month' award, for each stage, to recognise effort and to encourage all pupils to take part.

To ensure consistency in learning and teaching across the school, weekly staff meetings were held to discuss approaches to improving standards of writing and raising teacher and pupil expectations. Pupils were encouraged to make evaluative comments in their jotters, about the quality of their work. From weekly sampling of pupils' jotters, the SMT had noted an improvement in the quality and content of writing across other subject areas.

The school had purchased anthologies and non-fiction story books to increase pupil interest in reading for pleasure. Pupils were encouraged to read more and additional time had been set aside for personal reading. Pupils were given more opportunities to discuss the novels they had read. Parents had been encouraged and supported in helping to develop pupil confidence in reading. Teachers now used 'story bags' very effectively at P1 and P2. The school had made use of information and communication technology (ICT) at all stages to support pupils in developing their skill sin reading.

The school's investment in new reading materials had resulted in pupils becoming more aware of different writing styles and the effectiveness of different types of language. The anthology books directed pupils to other authors on related topics. This encouraged pupils to engage in personal research on other authors. Classroom assistants supported pupils at P3 and P5 through paired reading activities.

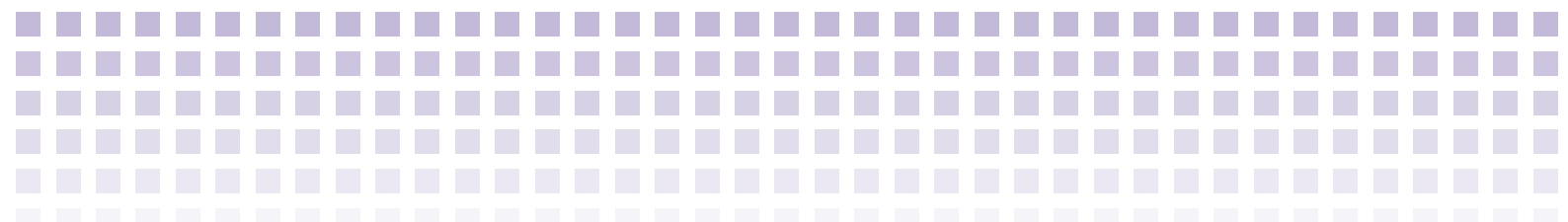
The school had participated in the national reading project "Scotland Reads". This involved volunteers working with pupils to encourage positive reading habits. These developments had also created more opportunities for pupils to develop their listening and talking skills through the use of power point presentations and co-operative learning.

### **3.3 Monitor closely the progress of pupils, especially for those pupils not achieving national levels of attainment.**

The school had made very good progress in addressing this point for action.

The SMT had developed further the existing monitoring calendar to include systematic observations of learning and teaching and sampling of pupils' work within different curricular areas.

To encourage pupils' achievement in national levels of attainment, the head teacher had organised support from the associated secondary school. Staff had provided training for teachers and pupils in the use of the 'Apodo system for learning' resource. This had helped pupils to identify their next steps in learning and gave them a clearer understanding of the learning process. It enabled them to assess their own progress.



At termly meetings, the SMT, in partnership with class teachers and the network support teacher, agreed appropriate pupil learning plans. Pupil progress was monitored and tracked monthly by the SMT to ensure the agreed targets were met.

The SMT and staff at P1/P2 shared the results from the PIPS assessment system to inform class teachers of the future learning needs of pupils. This ensured continuity in learning and teaching by building on previous learning experiences. Staff were then able to put into place any required early intervention strategies.

These additional developments undertaken by the head teacher and her staff had raised expectations of achievement for both pupils and staff and ensured pupil progress was systematically monitored and tracked.

### **3.4 Further develop its approaches to monitoring and evaluating its work to provide a firm basis for further improvement.**

The school had made very good progress in addressing this point for action.

The head teacher and staff had worked collaboratively in using the quality indicators contained in the national quality framework 'How Good is Our School' to monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

The annual monitoring calendar now ensured that there were appropriate processes in place to evaluate key areas of the school's work. Senior managers had used the information from self evaluation to identify areas for further improvement. These included aspects of English language, mathematics and, at P1 to P4, active learning through play. Staff discussed their plans for learning in these areas, regularly, with the SMT. Pupils' achievements in national assessments were monitored through structured discussions between SMT and staff. The head teacher and deputy head teacher now provided staff with helpful feedback to improve pupils' learning experiences. Best practice and areas for development were discussed and follow-up actions were agreed to enhance learning and teaching. As a result of these developments, the quality of learning and teaching had been improved. Developments in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school's provision have provided a firm basis for further improvement.

## **4 Conclusion**

The head teacher and her staff had responded positively to the main points for action contained in the original inspection report and in so doing had made considerable improvements to key areas of the school's work. The school had made very good progress and these developments had helped to improve pupils' learning experiences and placed the school in a strong position to improve standards even further.

Bill Fleming  
Acting Education Manager (Planning and Performance)



## How can you contact us?

Copies of this report have been sent to the head teacher and school staff, the school board, the Director of Education and Leisure Services, and local councillors. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from the address below or by telephoning **0141 842 5882**. Copies are also available on our web site: [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk).

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of this report, you should write in the first instance to John Rooney, Director of Education and Leisure Services at:

**Renfrewshire Council**  
**Education and Leisure Services,**  
**Renfrewshire House,**  
**Cotton Street,**  
**Paisley PA11LE**

